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INFORMATION

June 18, 1971

SC

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER

FROM: JOHN HOLDRIDGE

SUBJECT: COSVN Resolution 10 and Communist Strategy in Vietnam

So far, we have only the general outline of COSVN Resolution 10 provided us by briefing notes in captured documents and in agent reports. (The most complete of these reports is attached at Tab A.) Probably as a result of the capture of Resolution 9, Resolution 10 is apparently not being distributed below the regional level; therefore, we may never see the actual document.

The resolution probably was issued in January 1971, having been agreed at the Hanoi 19th Central Committee Plenum last December. It does not appear to differ greatly in form or content from Resolution 9 (of July 1969) and subsequent COSVN directives. Like all such documents it is largely hortatory in content. The following summary covers only the specific objectives and problems reportedly described in the resolution.

Military Objectives

Pacification continues to be the primary target. According to one account, the resolution declared that the defeat of pacification is "a life and death matter which determines the outcome of this war." This objective is to be reached by attacking or proselyting RF, PF, and PSDF units and by assassinating or otherwise neutralizing GVN pacification personnel.

Mountain and border areas are to be developed as strong main force and infrastructural bases. Sapper and shelling attacks are to grind down ARVN forces, stop them from entering Laos and Cambodia, and to "smash" pacification; however, pitched battles are generally to be avoided in South Vietnam. Guerrilla units are to be used to expand control in contested areas.

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E.O. 12958, SEC. 3.5
NSC MEMO, 11/24/98, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES [CIA Review]
BY LG, NARA, DATE 3/7/2000

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The conduct of the war in Laos depends on the needs of South Vietnam and Cambodia, according to COSVN 18.

To update Resolution 18, reportedly a Directive 61 was issued in April which stressed that Allied "losses" in Laos should be exploited by main force attacks in Cambodia, the tri-border area, and in Quang Tri and Quang Nam Provinces. Local and guerrilla forces were to concentrate on pacification targets. It should be noted that Directive 31, probably issued before Resolution 18, reportedly called for the defeat of the ARVN in Laos and Cambodia, and for the expansion of the "liberated" areas in Quang Tri Province, the Central Highlands, and the Delta.

~~Future Tactics~~

The resolution itself is characteristically vague concerning future tactical moves; however, the more specific Directive 61 reportedly describes tactics which the enemy has already employed since LAM SON 719 and will probably continue to pursue during the coming months -- "high point" attacks in MR I and the Central Highlands, lower level assaults on pacification targets, and main force attacks on vulnerable ARVN units in Cambodia (as at Snoul).

Neither the resolution nor the directive envisages another "Tet offensive." Nor do they appear inconsistent with greater emphasis on political struggle, especially in the urban areas.

Political Objectives

Control is to be expanded over the rural population by motivating those in refugee camps or resettlement areas to return to VC-controlled areas either by force or persuasion. Considerable emphasis was placed on exploiting the "urban struggle" by taking advantage of existing grievances (e.g., inflation, unemployment, "repression", etc.) and of anti-regime movements and organizations. Peace and coalition themes are to be used among the intelligentsia and bourgeoisie.

There is to be an increased effort to place "legal" cadres (i.e., those with a legitimate front) in the GVN administrative apparatus, the ARVN, and in various urban organizations both for political and intelligence purposes. According to one source, these "legal" cadres were to capitalize on a "sudden and significant" development of plans in 1971. The nature of these plans was not revealed.

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Communist Problems

Like Resolution 9, this resolution lists a number of serious problems and shortcomings.

-- Pacification has eroded the infrastructures and diminished the insecurity logistic and manpower base.

-- Cadres, inadequate in quantity and quality, are demoralized, poorly motivated, and passive. They meet "many obstacles" in trying to operate in GVN-controlled areas.

-- The GVN's PSDF has caused the in-place armed and political infrastructure considerable problem.

-- The "liberated areas" have not been expanded and the attack on pacification is not strong.

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